



A HOLY GHOST LIFE

OR

SAMUEL MORRIS, THE KRU BOY

By STEPHEN MERRITT

SAMUEL MORRIS was a Kru boy. He was an African of the Africans, a pure negro; when I first knew him he was probably about twenty years old. He was a resident of Liberia, where he was employed among English-speaking people as a house painter, and where he first found the Lord. A missionary girl came from the far West to go out under Bishop Taylor, and as I was secretary for the Bishop, I received her. I had become intimately acquainted with the Holy Ghost, and, of course, was full of Him.

I talked from the abundance of my heart to her of Him. I told her if she would receive Him she would be a success in Africa, and would not be sick, nor lonesome, nor wearied. He would be her strength, wisdom and comfort, and her life would be a continual psalm of praise in that dark continent. She hearkened—desired—consented—asked, and He came, an abiding presence. She departed, filled with the Spirit. Her companion missionaries thought she would be a failure, as she kept herself aloof and would sit alone and talk and cry and laugh; they thought she had left a lover behind, and therefore her actions. She had her lover with her; hence her peculiarities. She reached her station, sat down to her work—contented, blessed and happy.

This Kru boy, Samuel Morris, heard of her arrival, and walked miles to see her and talk about Jesus. She was filled and overflowed with the Holy Spirit, and was glad to pour out of Him on Samuel. He became enthused, and he desired and was determined to know the Comforter Divine. Journey after journey was made; hour after hour was spent in conversation on the darling theme; when she, wearied with a constant repetition, said: "If you want to know any more you must go to Stephen Merritt, of New York; he told me all I know of the Holy Ghost." "I am going—Where is he?" She laughingly answered: "In New York." She missed him; he had started. Weary miles he traversed before reaching the ocean. As he arrived on the shore a sailing vessel dropped her anchor in the offing, and a small boat put ashore; Samuel stepped up and asked the captain to take him to New York. He was refused with curses and a kick, but he answered, "Oh, yes, you will." He slept on the sand that night, and was again refused; the next morning, nothing daunted, he made the request again the third time, and was asked by the captain, "What can you do?" and he answered, "Anything." Thinking he was an able-bodied seaman, and as two men had deserted, and he was short-handed, he asked, "What do you want?" meaning pay. Samuel said: "I want to see Stephen Merritt." He said to the men in the boat, "Take this boy aboard."

He reached the ship, but he knew nothing of a vessel or of the sea. The anchor was raised and he was off: His ignorance brought much trouble; cuffs, curses and kicks were his in abundance; but his peace was as a river, his confidence unbounded and his assurance sweet. He went into the cabin to clean up—and the captain was convicted and converted; the fire ran through the ship, and half or more of the crew were saved. The ship became a Bethel, the songs and shouts of praise resounded, and nothing was too good for the uncouth and ungainly Kru boy.

They landed at the foot of Pike Street, E. R., and after the farewells were said, Samuel, with a bag of clothing furnished by the crew (for he went aboard with only a jumper and overalls, with no shoes), stepped on the dock, and stepping up to the first man he met, said: "Where is Stephen Merritt?" It was three or four miles away from my place, in a part of the city where I would be utterly unknown, but the Holy Spirit arranged that; one of the Travelers' Club was the man accosted, and he said: "I know him; he lives on Eighth Avenue, on the other side of town. I'll take you to him for

a dollar." "All right," said Samuel, though he had not one cent. They reached the store just as I was leaving for prayer meeting, and the tramp said, "There he is!" Samuel stepped up and said: "Stephen Merritt?" "Yes!" "I am Samuel Morris; I've just come from Africa to talk with you about the Holy Ghost." "Have you any letters of introduction?" "No—had no time to wait." "Well, all right; I am going to the Jane Street prayer meeting. Will you go into the mission next door. On my return I will see about your entertainment." "All right." "Say, young fellow," said the tramp, "where is my dollar?" "Oh, Stephen Merritt pays all my bills now," said Samuel. "Oh, certainly," said I, as I passed the dollar over.

I went to the prayer meeting—he to the mission. I forgot him until just as I put my key in the door, about 10.30 when Samuel Morris flashed upon my remembrance. I hastened over, found him on the platform with seventeen men on their faces, around him; he had just pointed them to Jesus, and they were rejoicing in his pardoning favor. I had never seen such a sight. The Holy Ghost in this figure of ebony, with all its surroundings, was indeed a picture.

Think, an uncultured, uncouth, uncultivated, but endowed, imbued and infilled African, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the first night in America, winning souls for Emanuel—nearly a score. No trouble now to take care of him. He was one of God's anointed ones. This was Friday. Saturday he stayed around. Sunday, I said, "Samuel, I would like you to accompany me to Sunday school. I am the Superintendent, and may ask you to speak." He answered, "I never was in Sunday school, but all right." I smilingly introduced him as one Samuel Morris, who had come from Africa to talk to their Superintendent about the Holy Spirit. I know not what he said. The school laughed, and as he commenced, my attention was called, and I turned aside for a few moments, when I looked, and lo, the altar was full of our young people, weeping and sobbing. I never could find out what he said, but the presence and manifested power of the Holy Spirit was so sensible that the entire place was filled with His glory.

The young people formed a "Samuel Morris Missionary Society," and secured money, clothes and everything requisite to send him off to the Bishop Taylor University at Fort Wayne, Ind. The days that passed while waiting to go were wonderful days. I took him in a coach, with a prancing team of horses, and I was going to Harlem to

officiate at a funeral. I said, "Samuel, I would like to show you something of our city and Central Park." He had never been behind horses nor in a coach, and the effect was laughable to me. I said, "Samuel, this is the Grand Opera House," and began to explain, when he said, "Stephen Merritt, do you ever pray in a coach?" I answered, "Oh, yes, I very frequently have very blessed times while riding about." He placed his great black hand on mine, and turning around on my knees, said, "We will pray," and for the first time I knelt in a coach to pray. He told the Holy Spirit he had come from Africa to talk to me about Him, and I talked about everything else, and wanted to show him the church, and the city, and the people, when he was so desirous of hearing and knowing about Him; and he asked Him if he would not take out of my heart things, and so fill me with Himself that I would never speak or write or preach or talk save of Him. There were three of us in that coach that day. Never have I known such a day—we were filled with the Holy Ghost; and he made him the channel by which I became instructed and then imbued as never before.

Bishops have placed their hands upon my head, once and again, and joined with elders of the church in ordination services, but no power came in comparison. James Caughey placed his holy hands on my head and the head of dear Thomas Harrison as he prayed that the mantle of Elijah might fall upon the Elishas—and the fire fell and the power came, but the abiding of the Comforter was received in the coach with Samuel Morris—for since then I have not written a line, or spoken a word, or preached a sermon only for or in the Holy Ghost.

Samuel Morris was an instrument in the hands of the Holy Ghost for the greater and grander development of Stephen Merritt in the wonderful things of God. He went to Fort Wayne. He turned the University upside down. He lived and died in the Holy Ghost, after accomplishing his work; and as a Holy Ghost man or woman never dies, so the life of Samuel Morris walks the earth to-day, and will live as long as I remain, and will never die. At his funeral three young men, who had received the Holy Spirit through his instruction, dedicated themselves to the work of God in Africa to take the place of Samuel Morris.

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